

Gambling in the Workplace: Information for Employers



New York Council on Problem Gambling

Gambling Defined

Gambling is defined as any activity (eg: a game of chance or skill) where an item of value is placed at risk in an attempt to gain something of greater value.

Did you know that 60% of adults in the U.S. have gambled in the past year? In NYS, 5% of adults have experienced a gambling problem in the past year and may be in need of treatment.

How might that impact your workplace?

Effects on the Workplace

Although not often recognized, problem gambling is a significant workforce issue. The effects of a gambling problem almost always spill over into the workplace. This occurs through either the gambler themselves or a family member who is living with the effects of a gambling problem.

- **Lost time**
- **Lost productivity**
- **Desperation can lead to theft, fraud, or embezzlement**



What does it look like?

- Office pools
 - Sports - fantasy sports, NCAA brackets, etc.
 - When is the baby coming?
- Lottery tickets as gifts or incentives
- Group purchasing of lottery tickets
- Encouraging or hosting activities at a casino or other gaming facility

Workplace Warning Signs

Work performance deteriorates.

- Preoccupied
- Trouble concentrating
- Absent or late for meetings
- Missed assignment deadlines
- Excessive use of telephone for personal calls
- Frequent, unexplained absences or disappearances from work.



Changes in Behavior and Mood.

- Pay is requested in lieu of vacation time.
- Eager to organize and participate in betting opportunities
- Increasingly spends more time gambling during lunch and coffee breaks.
- Frequently borrows money, argues with co-workers about money that is owed to them.
- Complains about mounting debts.
- Experiences mood swings, often related to winning and losing streaks.
- Credit card or loan bills are mailed to work rather than home.

Desperation.

- False claims are made against expense accounts.
- Theft of company property.



For more information

Contact your local
Problem Gambling Resource Center at
NYProblemGamblingHELP.org

Gambling in the Workplace: Employer Responsibilities



NYCPG

New York Council on Problem Gambling

Safety and Well-Being

As an employer it is your responsibility to create a workplace that promotes health and wellness for employees. Employers can maintain a supportive workplace by establishing guidelines and expectations that address workplace hazards. Policies often include language that prohibits the use of substances such as alcohol, tobacco, nicotine and other drugs to ensure the safety and well-being of individual employees, co-workers, management, clients and the business.

The information included will help guide you in creating a safe, gambling free workplace. For more information contact your local Problem Gambling Resource Center at NYProblemGamblingHELP.org

Why include gambling?

Gambling has been recently recognized as a **brain disease** and is categorized as a **Substance-Related and Addictive Disorder** in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM 5)

Be proactive!



- Create **policy**
- Utilize your **Employee Assistance Programs**
- **Monitor** money stream
- Know your **local help resources**
- Have the **conversation** about Problem Gambling

What can organizations do?

- Create a Gambling in the Workplace **policy**
- Provide **awareness training**
- Provide **financial counseling**
- **Monitor** the money stream
- Do not give out lottery tickets or host events at a casino or gaming facility
- Do not endorse office pools or allow them to be played

What can supervisors do?

- Express concerns in a **caring** and **supportive** manner
- Use work related **observations**
- Explain how the **problem** affects you
- Be **clear** about your position
- Respect personal **boundaries**
- Provide **information**, not advice
- Be **prepared** for denial or an adverse reaction

What can human resource professionals do?

- Have workplace **block gambling websites**
- Provide **education**
- Have **information and resources** on problem gambling readily available
- Express concerns in a **non-judgmental** way
- **Document** problems using work related observations

Gambling in the Workplace: Sample Policy Language



NYCPG

New York Council on Problem Gambling

Workplace Policy Guidelines

Effective workplace policies should include all of the essential elements below. For assistance modifying your current policies to include gambling and problem gambling, please reach out to your local Problem Gambling Resource Center. Contact information can be found at: NYProblemGamblingHELP.org

- Provide **justification** for including gambling in your policies.

Sample policy language:

We are committed to fostering a healthy and safe work environment for our employees and participants. We have a statutory duty to ensure that our employees do not endanger their own safety or that of other employees in the workplace or program participants. The purpose of this policy is three-fold: to increase awareness that gambling can and does become a problem for some individuals and families; to reduce unnecessary exposure to the possible harms that can come from gambling in the workplace; and to ensure that those in need have access to the support they need.



- **Define gambling** and **provide examples** to clarify what gambling is.

Sample policy language:

*For the purposes of this policy, “gambling” is defined as any activity involving some element of chance where an item of value is placed at risk in an attempt to gain something of greater value. Gambling activities include but are not limited to: raffles; lottery (lottery products including all jackpot games, daily games, instant scratch-off games, and video gaming); bingo for money or other items of value; any form of betting on sports, horses or other animals; internet gambling of any kind; casino games; any fantasy team or e-sports gambling; pull tabs; cards or dice for money or other items of value; slot and/or poker machines; video lottery terminals; and office pools. *Please note that this list is not exhaustive and that any activity involving the elements of chance, risk, value and reward is considered gambling by this agency.*

Sample Internet and Technology Use Policy Language:



Employees may not use internet access or technology provided by the company to participate in any gambling or gaming activities, this includes, but is not limited to: video gaming; social casino games; lottery purchases or exchanges; placing horse racing bets; fantasy football; and all other activities involving risk, value, chance and reward.

Gambling in the Workplace: Sample Policy Language



NYCPG

New York Council on Problem Gambling

Workplace Policy Guidelines continued

- Provide **specific guidelines** as to what is acceptable and what is not acceptable.

Sample policy language:

We believe that gambling during work hours or using work-related resources to gamble is not an appropriate use of work time/resources and can serve as a trigger or risk for many individuals and families. To reduce the negative effects of gambling on the workplace and the risk to employees and participants, no employee should participate in any gambling activity while working or using company provided equipment. This policy also explicitly prohibits gambling activity on any personal electronic device while working. Additionally, activities such as office pools, sports brackets, and similar activities are also prohibited by the company.

- Outline **specific consequences** if policy is not followed.

Sample policy language:

*We take the safety of our employees and participants very seriously. Gambling in the workplace can serve as a trigger for individuals and families in recovery and can lead to other effects that negatively impact work culture and employee and participant relations. If it is determined that any employee has been in violation of this policy, they will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. *Special considerations may be made for employees who express difficulties controlling their gambling and/or additional problems due to gambling activities. These considerations can include referral to our Employee Assistance Program and/or referral to additional supports and services.*

- Include **recommendations for referral** if someone needs help.

Sample policy language:

We seek to create a supportive workplace environment in which employees feel comfortable in seeking assistance and recovering from a variety of behavioral health issues, including problem gambling. Help is available for employees and family members negatively affected by gambling. If you or a family member is struggling with gambling-related consequences, please reach out to our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for appropriate screening and connection to available resources and supports. For local assistance, you can also reach out to your local Problem Gambling Resource Center (PGRC). Local contact information for your PGRC can be found at www.NYProblemGamblingHELP.org. All support and services through your EAP contact and the PGRC staff are completely confidential.

